



# CITY OF NEWPORT BEACH

OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK

P.O. BOX 1768, NEWPORT BEACH, CA 92658-8915

(949) 644-3005

August 28, 2002

Chairman Getman  
and Commissioners Downey, Knox and Swanson  
Fair Political Practices Commission  
428 J Street, Ste. 620  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: September 5, 2002 Commission Meeting  
Agenda Item #15

Dear Chairman Getman and Commissioners Downey, Knox and Swanson:

It has just come to my attention that all State agencies have been asked to submit a plan to cut expenditures by 20% in fiscal year 2003-04. Unfortunately, I am unable to attend your September 5<sup>th</sup> meeting to participate in this dialogue; therefore I am submitting this letter and ask that you take it into consideration during your deliberations and decision-making process.

I am currently the City Clerk in Newport Beach and have held this position for almost seven years. Prior to that time I served as Assistant City Clerk in Manhattan Beach for approximately eight years. As you are fully aware, City Clerks serve as filing officer for campaign statements, as well as Statements of Economic Interest for designated employees. In reviewing the memo from Chairman Getman and Executive Director Krausse dated August 26, 2002 to the Commission, I would like to point out that cuts to some of these programs will certainly impact City Clerks in our role as filing officers. Rather than trying to address each program and area under consideration, I would like to focus on just a few areas where cuts would greatly impact me in my capacity as filing officer.

## Hotline

During my 15-year tenure in the City Clerks profession, I have had numerous occasions to use this service. I used this service when budgets were tight and it was virtually impossible to get answers to questions in a timely manner. As you know, the regulations are very complicated and can be intimidating to anyone who is not familiar with them. With your toll-free number and technical assistance advice line, I do not hesitate to refer any of my filers (candidates or designated employees) to your hotline number for advice. I have heard nothing but positive comments from my filers when they call your toll-free number and they are able to get immediate answers to their questions. My own experience with the hotline has been nothing but positive and has certainly made my duties much easier. I have confidence that when I call I will be able to actually talk to someone immediately and the advice they provide will be accurate. The quality of the advice, as well as being able to receive it in a timely fashion is very crucial.

3300 Newport Boulevard, Newport Beach

August 28, 2002  
Page Two

Outreach Program

In May 2002, I was fortunate enough to be one of the cities to participate in the Filing Officer Outreach Program. While I wish I could report that I was doing everything perfect, I found that not to be the case. This program was extremely valuable to me, and based upon the assistance and guidance provided to me by your staff, I have implemented a number of changes to insure that I am in compliance with my duties and functions as a filing officer. This program is invaluable and should be made available to anyone who serves in a filing officer role. No price can be put on a service that provides one on one assistance and guidance.

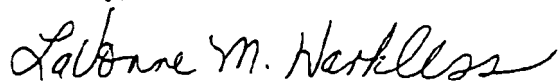
Filing Officer Training Programs and On-Site Seminars

With the exception of training sessions held at City Clerk's meetings, I have not had an opportunity to attend any of these seminars for a number of years. However, when I was employed by the City of Manhattan Beach, I hosted an on-site seminar for local candidates. The seminar and the information provided was invaluable to everyone who attended. Based on that positive experience, I now strongly encourage my candidates and treasurers to attend these seminars. Again, I have heard nothing but positive comments about the quality, as well as the helpfulness, of the seminars.

While I fully understand that you have been tasked with the responsibility of making these cuts and don't envy you in this process, I hope that you will take my comments into consideration and look for areas where cuts can be made that will not impact the services that you currently provide to City Clerks, as well as our filers. The services now provided by the FPPC are exemplary and you and your staff are to be commended for the improvements that they have made over the last few years. In order to preserve the integrity of the Political Reform Act it is imperative that these services remain intact as they are functioning today.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



LaVonne M. Harkless, CMC  
City Clerk